

**OPINION 2138 (Case 3097)*****Bolboceras* Kirby, 1819 (July) (Insecta, Coleoptera): not conserved; priority maintained for *Odonteus* Samouelle, 1819 (June)**

**Abstract.** The Commission has ruled that priority should be maintained for the generic name *Odonteus* Samouelle, 1819 for a group of scarab beetles (family GEOTRUPIDAE). The junior name *Bolboceras* Kirby, 1819 is not given precedence over the older name whenever they are considered to be synonyms. In the interest of stability all previous fixations of type species for the nominal genus *Bolboceras* Kirby, 1819 are set aside and *Scarabaeus quadridens* Fabricius, 1781 is designated as the type species.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; Coleoptera; GEOTRUPIDAE; *Bolboceras*; *Odonteus*; *Scarabaeus quadridens*; scarab beetle.

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**Ruling**

- (1) Under the plenary power it is hereby ruled that all previous fixations of type species for the nominal genus *Bolboceras* Kirby, 1819 are hereby set aside and *Scarabaeus quadridens* Fabricius, 1781 is designated as the type species.
- (2) It is hereby ruled that the name *Odonteus* Samouelle, 1819 retains priority over the name *Bolboceras* Kirby, 1819 whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.
- (3) The following names are hereby placed on the Official List of Generic names in Zoology:
  - (a) *Odonteus* Samouelle, 1819 (gender: masculine), type species by monotypy *Scarabaeus mobilicornis* Fabricius, 1775;
  - (b) *Bolboceras* Kirby, 1819 (gender: neuter), type species by designation in (1) above *Scarabaeus quadridens* Fabricius, 1781.
- (4) The name *quadridens* Fabricius, 1781, as published in the binomen *Scarabaeus quadridens* and as defined by the lectotype designated in BZN 60: 306 (specific name of the type species of *Bolboceras* Kirby, 1819), is hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

**History of Case 3097**

An application to conserve the generic name *Bolboceras* Kirby, 1819 for a group of scarab beetles (family GEOTRUPIDAE) by giving it conditional precedence over the older name *Odonteus* Samouelle, 1819 was received from M.L. Jameson (*University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, Nebraska, U.S.A.*) and H.F. Howden (*Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, Canada*) on 26 August 1998. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 59: 246–248 (December 2002). The title, abstract and keywords of the case were published on the Commission's website. Three comments in support of the application, providing additional information relevant to the case, were published in BZN 59: 280–281; 61: 43 and 113–114. A lengthy comment opposing the proposals was published in BZN 60: 303–311 in which alternative

proposals were published (p. 307), to which the author's reply (BZN 61: 43–45) was answered in BZN 61: 110–113. Another comment in opposition was published in BZN 61: 171–173. Two comments correcting the gender of the name *Bolboceras* to neuter were published (BZN 61: 113–114; 62: 28–29) and were reflected in the proposals printed on the voting paper.

### Decision of the Commission

On 1 September 2005 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 59: 247, restated on the voting paper with corrections, and alternative proposals (BZN 60: 307) also reprinted on the voting paper. At the close of the voting period on 1 December 2005 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes:

original proposals BZN 59: 247 para. 6 (1)-(3) – 3: Bock, Papp and Song;

original proposals BZN 59: 247 para. 6 (3)(a)-(b) – 1: Patterson;

original proposals BZN 59: 247 para. 6 (3)(b) – 3: Alonso-Zarazaga, Lamas and Mahnert.

Negative vote (opposing all proposals) – 1: Kerzhner.

Negative votes (opposing original proposals para. 6 (1)-(3)), approving the alternative proposals BZN 60: 307 para. 9 (1)-(3) – 17: Alonso-Zarazaga, Bouchet, Brothers, Calder, Fortey, Halliday, Lamas, Macpherson, Mahnert, Mawatari, Minelli, Ng, Nielsen, Patterson, Rosenberg, Štys and van Tol.

Voting against, Alonso-Zarazaga commented: 'this is a particular case of split prevailing usage among geographically separated zoologists, as Krell, Ballerio & Ziani (2004, p. 111) show. For those of us that believe in the Principle of Priority as the main rule governing nomenclature, there is no problem in doing a selection: *Odonteus* is one month older than *Bolboceras*. Štys & Král (2005, pp. 28–29) show us the way to follow the true spirit of the Code as our arbiter. It is regrettable that 'convenience' defence is still producing loss of time and efforts in nomenclatural affairs, while there is so much to be done for stability and universality in other areas. It is my opinion that the present Code should be emended in the next edition to reinforce priority versus 'convenience'; this is a blot in nomenclature since the *Règles* times. The Code of Botany allows 'reversal of priority' only under most strict circumstances, while our Code is too flexible and liable to be invoked for unimportant cases. If these lines of mine may merit a lecture, I would ask my zoologist colleagues to resort to 'priority reversal' only in cases where taxa of importance (e.g. medical, veterinary, conservation, etc.) are involved. Otherwise priority should be applied'. Similarly, Kerzhner also voted against 'both the original and alternative proposals' and commented: 'I do not consider that the plenary power should be used to give *Bolboceras* precedence over *Odonteus*. Both names are currently widely used and priority should apply. I do not consider that the plenary power should be used to set aside the valid type species designation by Curtis and to designate *Scarabaeus quadridens* as the type species, thus shifting the name *Bolboceras* to a further concept for which a generic name (*Indobolbus*) was established long ago and used in some important works (a Google search gives 16 references). If priority had been applied, *Scarabaeus mobilicornis* Fabricius, 1775 (junior synonym of *Scarabaeus armiger* Scopoli, 1772) would be the type species of *Odonteus* by monotypy and of *Bolboceras* by subsequent designation (Curtis, 1829) making *Bolboceras* a junior objective

synonym of *Odonteus*. This fact does not prevent further use of family-group names based on *Bolboceras* (see Code, Article 40.1)'. Voting against, Ng commented: 'this is a complex case and I vote to maintain the synonymy established by Krell (1990) even though this has clearly upset the general understanding and will still cause some 'pain' now. But the fact is, both names share the same type species and are synonyms. Also, it is now 15 years since Krell's paper was published and taxonomists would have learnt to adapt to a changing world. I also note that the genus (whatever name being used) contains only less than a dozen species and thus cannot create too many problems. As such, since the change has been made, and *Odonteus* Samouelle, 1819 is a senior synonym of *Bolboceras* Kirby, 1819, I prefer to let it stand and request that taxonomists adapt to this change'. Also voting against, van Tol commented: 'to avoid future discussion, I prefer to have a ruling for the type species of *Bolboceras* Kirby (as in (3) of the alternative proposal)'.

### Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on Official Lists by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

*Bolboceras* Kirby, 1819, *Transactions of the Linnean Society of London*, **12**(2): 459.

*Odonteus* Samouelle, 1819, *The entomologist's useful compendium; or an introduction to the knowledge of British insects . . .*, p. 189.

*quadridens*, *Scarabaeus*, Fabricius, 1781, *Systema entomologiae, sistens insectorum classes, ordines, genera, species, adiectis synonymis, locis, descriptionibus, observationibus*, p. 11.

The following is the reference for the designation of the lectotype of *Scarabaeus quadridens* Fabricius, 1781:

**Krell, F-T., Ziani, S. & Ballerio, A.** 2003. *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*, **60**: 306.